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Title:

Speech at the Greyhound of the Year presentation, Redlegs Club, Norwood

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SPEECH BY THE PREMIER, MR. DUNSTAN, AT THE GREYHOUND OF THE YEAR
PRESENTATION, REDLEGS CLUB, NORWOOD.

16:1:76

Mr. Alsop, Alderman Joseph, Mr. Rollins, Mr. Johnstone, My Parliamentary Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen:

Thanks very much for asking me to present your first Greyhound of the Year Award. Greyhound racing is an exciting sport, but if some of the predictions we've heard in the past few weeks about Monday come true, the meeting at Gawler will be even more exciting.

It's always a pleasure to accept an invitation from your sport, but I am especially pleased to be here tonight because this presentation shows clearly how greyhound racing has grown in South Australia.

It has been an outstanding development, because it is only ten years since greyhound speed racing was legalised, and less than five years since the TAB started operating on your meetings. Both those decisions were made by Labor Governments and I am very pleased that the sport has gone ahead so well.

Looking back, it seems almost laughable that greyhound racing was illegal right up until 1966. The sport was well established and very popular in almost every other state but South Australians, it seemed, could not be allowed to watch greyhounds because it would somehow disturb the community.

Well, of course, South Australia hasn't been upset by greyhound racing. Quite the opposite in fact, because your sport has given enjoyment to the thousands of people who attend the meetings organised by the five clubs. As well, greyhound racing has allowed many people to train their own dogs and take part in the sport, which is good.

Greyhound racing is the one of the few sports in which someone on an average wage can take part because the costs are within his reach. That ease of participation is very important because it allows your sport to be easily accessible to the entire community.

Certainly the figures show that the community has taken to greyhounds with great enthusiasm. At the end of the financial year 1971/72, 3341 dogs were registered with your Association and 1181 trainers were active. At

the end of the last financial year, 8576 dogs were on the NCA's books and the number of trainers had jumped to 4980, a very marked and welcome increase both from the point of view of the industry and also from the point of view of more people becoming involved in the sport they enjoy.

Of course, it may not just be the sport that has encouraged them. In that same period, prizemoney for greyhound racing jumped from \$82,746 in 1971/72 to \$308,417 last year, an agreeable incentive.

As Premier, I am very pleased that a large measure of that increase has come about because of the Government's financial commitment to the racing industry generally, and to your sport in particular.

Through both the TAB and the Racecourses Development Boards, we have made money available to meet the costs of running the three codes and for promotion and capital improvements.

Since its establishment in 1972 the Racecourses Development Board has given the clubs almost \$210,000 to improve facilities at the grounds, in the city and the country.

The TAB, since it started operating on greyhounds has provided almost \$770,000 for your sport, beginning with about \$40,000 in 1971 to \$266,000 last year. To a large part that very marked increase has been caused by the growth of the industry since the TAB started operating, but that growth has now reached a plateau and the percentage of TAB turnover from greyhounds has levelled out at around 13 per cent. The advantage of the TAB formula for your sport is that you will still receive an increasing amount each year as total turnover rises, even if the greyhound component in percentage terms remains fairly steady.

Those figures mean that the Government, through the TAB and the Racecourses Board has channelled almost one million dollars to the greyhound industry in the last four years, and that greyhound racing will be able to expand further because it is supported by a favorable financial arrangement which allows you to share in the growth of the entire industry.

Let me say here that while the Government has been pleased to help your industry, the very rapid growth of greyhound racing in this state could not have come about without the dedication and enthusiasm of the officials of your clubs who have put so much of their time and energy into the sport because they want others to enjoy it.

The value of their work cannot be under-estimated, and particularly the officials of the country clubs deserve special recognition for their achievements. The amenities available to the people in the country are often, of necessity, not equal to those enjoyed by the city dweller and it has been one of the Government's objectives to try to lift the standard of community facilities in the country. In the case of the greyhound industry, the officials of the country clubs have performed a service not only for the clubs but for their cities as well.

The Government wants to encourage the racing industry to develop and I am sure the new Racing Act, which will be introduced in Parliament later this year, will further that aim.

While I know there are still a few matters to be resolved regarding your code, I am sure both the industry and the public agree that a single Racing Act is preferable to the previous fragmented approach.

The Racing Act will, provide the basis for an expansion in the number and frequency of race meetings.

The new Act has been drafted only after extensive discussions with the three codes in the Racing Industry and I am confident that its introduction will bring considerable benefit to your industry.

For greyhound racing, the new Act will lead to an even better standard of racing and better facilities for the spectators and punters. I am sure the racing journalists who will choose the Greyhound of the Year in the future will have an increasingly difficult task each year.

But to get back to the present, and the announcement which we have been waiting for, I have much pleasure in announcing the Greyhound of the Year.

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